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BASEBALL



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Thomas Gray, Pirates Blank No. 16 USC Aiken, 4-0





Posted: Apr 16, 2010

SAVANNAH, Ga. - Armstrong Atlantic State senior righthander **Thomas Gray** hurled his first career shutout as a Pirate, limiting No. 16-ranked USC Aiken to two hits in a 4-0 Peach Belt Conference baseball victory on Friday afternoon at Pirate Field.

Gray's win improves the Pirates (23-17, 5-11 PBC) to 4-2 in their last six games, while handing USC Aiken (27-14, 14-8 PBC) its second straight Peach Belt loss.

The righthander took a no-hit bid into the top of the seventh inning, but a leadoff double by David Vitko broke up the no-hitter. He pitched out of a bases-loaded one-out jam in the seventh, inducing a fly ball to center and an inning-ending fielder's choice off the bat of JJ Loker to end the threat.

Gray then retired the Pacers in the eighth on an inning-ending double play and set USC Aiken down in order in the ninth for the victory. He gave up just two hits and two walks in the 97-pitch nine inning effort, striking out two to improve to 4-2 on the season, facing just 31 batters. It was just the second career complete game at AASU for Gray, who also beat Augusta State, 3-2, back on Feb. 23 in his first complete game as a Pirate.

AASU would receive all its offense in the first inning, sending nine batters to the plate against Pacer starter Steven Owens (5-3). The first five batters in the inning reached against Owens, with John Roberts and Cameron Scott coming up with RBI singles, then Michael Price delivered a two-RBI single with the bases loaded to make the score 4-0.

Owens hurled 6 1/3 innings of ball, giving up nine hits and four runs, walking four and striking out three to take the loss for the Pacers.

Cameron Scott and Carlos Cardoza-Oquendo were the only Pirates to pick up multiple hits on the day, with Scott adding a double to his RBI single in the first. Alex Wyche had a hit and a stolen base, extending his PBC-leading steal total to 39.

Vitko and Key, who singled in the eighth, had the only hits in the game for the Pacers.

The Pirates and the Pacers wrap up their three-game PBC series with a doubleheader on Saturday, beginning at 12:30 p.m., at Pirate Field.



ARMSTRONG STATE UNIVERSITY

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